



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 117th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 168

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2022

No. 188

Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, we come today seeking a deeper understanding of Your ways. Life often seems like a difficult riddle, but in spite of its challenges, You sustain us with Your majesty and love.

Lord, forgive us when we think too often of ourselves and forget the pain of those around us. Make us willing to pay the price for freedom.

We bring to You the Members of this legislative body. Empower them to bear the weight of responsibility. Give them the desire to honor You. Lord, fill their hearts with gratitude for the unfolding of Your prevailing providence. Evaporate their fears like the morning mist.

We pray in Your powerful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Frances Kay Behm, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PETERS). The Republican leader is recognized.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, 2 years into the Biden administration, the Democrats' approach to illegal immigration and our Nation's borders has failed the American people.

Last week, one news organization reported that daily crossings along our southern border have remained near record highs. Last fiscal year alone, more than 2.76 million illegal immigrants came across our southern border, absolutely smashing the previous record-high by more than a million. That is almost the equivalent of a full 1 percent of our total national population encountered on our southern border in just 1 year. The problem actually keeps getting worse. Reported estimates say that more than 73,000 new "got-aways" dodged Border Patrol and escaped into our country in just this past November alone.

Absurdly, the response to this crisis from President Biden's team is that everything is fine—everything is fine—and going according to plan. Secretary Mayorkas said last month, "What we are doing is precisely what we announced we would do in April of this year, and we have indeed been executing on the plan."

Now, everybody else in the country calls our functionally open borders an emergency and a crisis, but apparently

the Biden administration calls it mission accomplished. And bear in mind, the terrible and unacceptable status quo has come with some emergency COVID measures still in place. All the crisis-level numbers I just ran through have come with these extra border controls—called title 42—actually still in effect.

Now, one Federal judge is trying to force the Biden administration to do what the far left has wanted for months and actually repeal the policy. So the unacceptable crisis-level status quo may only be the warmup act compared to coming attractions. One immigration expert told a reporter, "It is definitely, at least in the short run, going to result in many, many more people being released into the United States." Congressman GONZALES, who represents Texas's 23rd District, says it would be a "hurricane" for border communities.

Of course, the Biden administration officials who claim they have a plan to cope with the removal of title 42 are the same people who brought us record-breaking illegal immigration even with it in place. So make no mistake, a choice between the current border situation with title 42 and an even worse situation without title 42 is a choice between a disaster and a catastrophe.

Democrats need to stop shuffling deck chairs on the Titanic and start looking to the tough, proven, successful policies that allowed the preceding administration to get a handle on the issue, and they need to drop the forgiving attitude to illegal immigration that draws more and more men, women, and children on the dangerous journey to our border every single day. It is inexcusable that the Biden administration cares more about getting protested by far-left activists than they do about providing a basic level of order and security.

Everyone knows what steps would improve the situation. The playbook from the prior administration is right

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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